

Eastbury Farm Primary School

Bishops Avenue, Northwood, HA6 3DG

Inspection dates 11–12 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders, including governors, have not been sufficiently thorough in implementing and recording staff recruitment checks. Although there is no indication that pupils have been put at risk, the school's systems for ensuring the safer recruitment of staff are not rigorous enough. Until pointed out by inspectors, the school's single central register did not meet statutory requirements.
- The governing body has too little knowledge of the performance management of the school's staff and the link between performance and pay.

The school has the following strengths

- Standards throughout the school are high. By the end of each key stage, results are much higher than the national average.
- Pupils behave very well and are polite and courteous. They follow the school rules and play well together. Pupils take pride in their work.
- Pupils feel safe at school and are taught how to keep themselves safe. They feel safe from bullying and are confident that teachers will be able to deal with any issues that should arise.
- The school's leaders have created a culture where pupils are expected to work hard, behave well and do their best.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving because leaders made it a clear priority. Good relationships, well-established routines and good questioning skills are particular strengths.
- Parents express a high degree of satisfaction with the school. They are confident that their children are safe and are happy with the progress they make. The vast majority of parents would recommend the school to others.
- Early years provision is good and children make good progress, particularly in phonics (the sounds that letters make). Children are well prepared for Year 1.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching and learning. They observed parts of 26 lessons throughout the school, some jointly with the acting headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils’ books, listened to them read and talked to them about their work. Inspectors examined the school’s documentation on pupils’ achievement and the quality of teaching.
- The views of parents were taken into account, including: the 62 parents who responded to Parent View (Ofsted’s online questionnaire); the 37 parents who attended a meeting with the lead inspector; and parents who spoke to inspectors on the playground.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, parents, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents including information about safeguarding, the school’s self-evaluation and improvement plans, and behaviour and attendance records.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Vanessa Love	Additional Inspector
Philip Garnham	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This primary school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It admits 45 children per year into the Reception class and this means that there are mixed-age classes throughout the school.
- There have been a number of significant staff changes since the school was last inspected five years ago. After a period of interim headship, the current substantive headteacher took up his post in September 2013. He is currently taking a brief period of planned absence and is expected to return to the school after Easter. A part-time acting headteacher is currently leading the school during the headteacher's period of planned absence.
- Children enter the Nursery Year part time in the September after their third birthday. Children enter the Reception Year full time in the September after their fourth birthday.
- Few children are eligible for the pupil premium, far fewer than the national average. The pupil premium provides additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is similar to the national average. White British pupils form the largest ethnic group. About a third of pupils are Asian or British Asian.
- About a fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language; this is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school is situated close to the Northwood military headquarters and children of service personnel frequently join and leave the school as their parents' deployment dictates. This means that the stability of the school's population is much lower than in most primary schools.
- The school meets current floor standards; these are the minimum expectations, set by the government, for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by strengthening the safer recruitment procedures by ensuring that:
 - all key personnel have completed safer recruitment training
 - roles and responsibilities for the recruitment of staff are clear
 - an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) is obtained for all new employees and recorded correctly in the school's single central register
 - a separate barred list check is carried out beforehand if a new employee is permitted to take up their post before the DBS certificate is available
 - where an employee is to be permitted to take up their post before the DBS certificate is available, a thorough risk assessment is carried out and suitable measures are put in place to ensure adequate supervision at all times
 - where an employee has been permitted to take up their post before the DBS certificate is available, the DBS certificate is obtained as soon as is practicable and is immediately added to the school's single central register
 - satisfactory written references are obtained for all new employees, regardless of the nature of their post, before their appointment is confirmed and they are permitted to take up their post where testimonials and open references are accepted, evidence is filed with them to show that they have been received directly from the referee.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - increasing the amount of outstanding teaching in the school and developing greater consistency by sharing the best practice of the most effective teachers
 - ensuring that all lessons offer appropriate challenge to pupils so that their high levels of interest in their work is always maintained.

- Improve progress in writing so that all pupils, but particularly the most able, make at least expected progress during Key Stage 2 and the proportion who make greater than expected progress is at least in line with the national average.

- Improve governance by ensuring that:
 - the governing body meticulously discharges all its statutory responsibilities
 - governors have appropriate knowledge of the school's performance management procedures so that they are able ensure that good teaching is rewarded and underperformance tackled.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders have not been meticulous enough in implementing systems and procedures around the safer recruitment of staff. The school's systems for obtaining references for potential new employees are not rigorous enough and do not follow the advice given in the statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education* closely enough. The school's approach to obtaining adequate references when appointing midday supervisory assistants is too lax. By the end of the inspection it was possible to establish that statutory requirements for maintenance of a single central register had been met. Statutory safeguarding requirements are met.
- The substantive headteacher has created a culture where there is a strong expectation that pupils will behave well and do their best. There is clear evidence that the quality of teaching has improved and is improving.
- The acting headteacher has been in post for a matter of days. In his brief time at the school he has focused his attention on gaining an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and of the school's key priorities. The deputy headteacher balances her part-time teaching commitment well with her leadership responsibilities. Parents were fulsome in their praise of the deputy headteacher and of the continuity she has provided during the recent changes.
- The pupil premium grant is spent effectively and disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The inclusion coordinator ensures that the grant is focused on meeting the needs of individual pupils and she monitors their progress closely.
- The inclusion coordinator is effective in ensuring that the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are met. She meets regularly with class teachers and monitors pupils' progress closely.
- The leaders of English, mathematics and other curriculum areas are increasingly effective. They have a good understanding of the school's priorities and are committed to ensuring that the school continues to improve. They monitor the quality of teaching and the standard of pupils' work in their areas of responsibility regularly.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is spent well. A wider range of clubs are now available (for example, cheerleading and Tae-Kwondo) following a survey of pupils' interests. The proportion of pupils who attend a club has doubled as a result of the school's use of the sport premium; 55% of pupils now attend at least one club. The funding has also been used to fund specialist coaches to work directly with pupils, observed by class teachers, in order to improve the quality of teaching in the subject.
- The basis of the school's curriculum is developing key skills (such as writing) across the full range of subjects in the new National Curriculum. The school has used the reorganisation of its curriculum as an opportunity to place greater emphasis on developing writing across the range of subjects. The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern British society through, for example, its emphasis on research, on making topics relevant and teaching pupils to write clearly and well. Pupils are taught about fundamental British values such as democracy through the election of the School Council, visits to the Houses of Parliament and debates in assembly.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well. When discussing equality issues with the lead inspector one pupil said that everyone is equally valuable at Eastbury Farm and 'everyone is a team'. Pupils are tolerant and accepting and they know that discrimination is wrong. The school teaches pupils about key civil rights figures – such as Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela – and is effective in helping pupils to understand the issues that they fought for.
- The local authority has provided strong support to the school over recent years. It has supported the school well including providing additional advisory visits, monitoring the school closely, providing curriculum support and securing strong interim leadership arrangements for the school, both now and

during an earlier period of change.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors were surprised by the safeguarding issues raised during the inspection. While they have managed the current period of uncertainty well, they ‘took their eye off the ball’ in terms ensuring that statutory safeguarding requirements are met and that safer recruitment practices are robust and thorough.
- The governing body has been active in addressing issues that have arisen since the previous inspection. For example, they were quick to seek support and advice from the local authority when concerns became apparent some years ago.
- Governors know the school well and have an accurate perception of the quality of teaching. They have a good understanding of data and are able to use this knowledge to judge the school’s performance accurately.
- The governing body manages the headteacher’s performance management well and hold him to account well. However, they have little knowledge of the performance management of the rest of the school’s staff and the link between performance and pay.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and confident and are keen to talk about their school. They have good manners and show this by, for example, holding doors open and routinely saying ‘please’ and ‘thank you’.
- Pupils are given appropriate responsibility and respond to it well. For example, the Year 6 play leaders are effective in helping the younger pupils to play well together. The Head Boy and Head Girl are very effective ambassadors for the school and some pupils commented that they would go to them first if they had a problem or were worried about something.
- Pupils behave very well both in lessons and around the school. The school’s rules are very clear and pupils follow them. Good, well-established routines are evident in classrooms and this means that little learning time is lost. Pupils usually show very good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is and what they should do if it happens to them. They know about different types of bullying and they have been taught to tell an adult if something happens that concerns them. Some pupils say that there is a little bit of bullying at the school but pupils agree that teachers deal with it quickly when it does occur.
- A large number of parents attended an open meeting with the lead inspector. They were extremely positive about the standards of behaviour at the school and the way that the school deals with incidents when they arise. Parents commented that their children love coming to school and they feel happy and safe at Eastbury Farm.
- Attendance has been below the national average for a number of years. However, as a result of the school’s energetic approach to promoting good attendance, this figure is steadily improving. The school is on track to be broadly in line with the national average this year; current attendance to date is a full percentage point higher than for the equivalent period last year.

Safety

- The school’s work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement because systems for the safer recruitment of staff are not rigorous enough.
- Pupils and their parents say that they feel safe at school and inspectors agree. Pupils are taught about a range of ways to keep themselves safe including road safety, fire safety and cycle safety.
- The school has been particularly effective in teaching pupils about e-safety. Pupils who met with the lead

inspector showed a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe online and were able to discuss the issues with maturity.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school has worked very hard to improve the quality of teaching. There is clear evidence that the school has been successful in 'turning the tide' and that quality of teaching is on a strongly upward trajectory. As a result, pupils achieve well and make increasingly good progress.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are strength of the school. Teachers know their pupils well and provide increasingly well for their individual needs.
- Pupils are taught how to be independent learners. Routines in classrooms are clear and well established and this enables pupils to get on with their tasks without needing the support of an adult. Pupils are used to using a range of resources independently to support them with their learning.
- Teachers show good strong questioning skills. They use targeted questions effectively to check pupils' understanding and to encourage them to think more deeply.
- There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge and use of a wide vocabulary. Teachers frequently encourage pupils to think of a 'better word' in lessons and to use the vocabulary specific to the subject being taught. For example, in a Year 3 literacy lesson pupils were encouraged to use words such as 'endangered' and 'extinct' when writing a discussion text about the existence of zoos.
- In the best examples, the vibrancy of lessons capture pupils' interest and encourages excellent attitudes to learning. When teaching is at its best, direct input by the teacher and the tasks given to pupils to do are well matched to pupils' abilities and interests. Some very strong teaching was seen on inspection and school records show that this is typical. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and pupils sometimes become less interested in lessons when weaker teaching fails to engage them as effectively.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good and improving. Pupils attain well throughout the school. Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check (an assessment of pupils' knowledge of the relationships between letters and sounds) are well above the national average. Pupils use their phonics skills well to read and write new and unfamiliar words.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are very high. Pupils consistently attain levels that are well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. These high level of attainment are maintained as pupils continue through the school and overall standards have been consistently well above the national average for several years. In 2014 results were well above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and spelling and grammar.
- The most-able pupils reach high levels and generally make good progress. In 2014, the proportion of the most-able pupils who achieved the higher levels in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 was well above the national average in all subjects. However, the amount of progress that this group of pupils made in writing was well below the national average.
- School records and pupils' work show that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. The Inclusion Coordinator knows this group of pupils well and monitors their progress closely to ensure that they achieve well.
- There were too few disadvantaged pupils in the 2014 cohort to allow their attainment to be compared with their peers without risk of identifying them. However, the school's data and the works seen in pupils' books shows clearly that disadvantaged pupils make good progress and that any gaps between the

attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers narrows as they move through the school.

- The quality of writing seen in pupils' books is good and there was clear evidence of good progress in the work sampled. In most classes pupils write neatly, take care and show pride in their work. It is clear that the school's emphasis on improving teaching in writing and increasing the progress pupils make is beginning to pay dividends. Although pupils generally make good progress, results at the end of Key Stage 2 show that too few pupils make better than expected progress in writing.

The early years provision

is good

- Pupils make good progress in early years. The proportion who reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is well above the national average. Children are prepared well for Year 1.
- The deputy headteacher has been covering the role of early years leader since January and has a very firm grasp of its strengths and areas for development. She has focused on appropriate priorities and it is clear that provision is developing well.
- The environment is bright and attractive and the outdoor provision is developing well. Staff use the indoor space effectively but there are some issues with the way that the space is used. During direct teaching time it is sometimes difficult for some children to maintain their concentration because they are distracted by the legitimate noise from several other groups operating in the room at the same time.
- The quality of teaching is good, particularly teaching in the nursery and the teaching of phonics throughout the provision. Children learn the school routines quickly and know how they are expected to behave.
- The children's individual learning journals are detailed and thorough, including a range of information. Parents are given regular opportunities to look at and respond to their child's learning journal.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	117245
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	453220

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	348
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ralph Sangster
Headteacher	David Smith (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2010
Telephone number	01923 824543
Fax number	01923 842450
Email address	admin@eastburyfarm.herts.sch.uk

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